

A
Funeral Sermon
ON THE
DECEASE
Of the Reverend
Mr. *John Woodhouse*,
Late Minister of the Gospel
IN
LONDON.

By *Daniel Williams.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *R. Tookey* for *Tho. Cockerill*,
at the *Bible and Tkree Leggs* in
the *Poultry*, 1701.

A

Funeral Sermon

ON THE

DECEASE

Of the Reverend

Mr. John Woodhouse

Late Minister of the Gospel



LONDON

By Daniel Williams

Printed by A. Smith, in the Strand

[REDACTED]

T O

**The CONGREGATION at
Little St. Hellen, lately Attend-
ing the Ministry of Mr. Wood-
house.**

Several Indispositions with some Backward-
ness to Publish this Sermon, made it Late
before I could attempt an Answer to your Re-
quest. In Transcribing it, I found a Necessity
of Enlarging on those Heads in the Former
Part; which were but named in your Hearing.
There the Subject is something Obscure, yet see-
ing the Scriptures only, were capable of giving
any Certain Account of the Nature of Pro-
phesie; I less repine, that I'm confined to my
Bible, by Circumstances which deny Access to
my other Books, to search the Conjectures of
Jewish or Christian Writers.

THERE's a Paragraph likewise added to
the Character of your late Worthy Pastor, viz.
Some Instances of Divine Mercy to him in his
Life and Death; which I would not have mista-
ken, as if I thought the want of, yea, or the Evils
contrary to most of those, were any Way inconsi-
stent with the True Felicity of a Faithful Mi-
nister;

The EPISTLE.

nister; no, no. He is happy notwithstanding Hardships, whom God guideth here with his Counsel, and afterwards brings to Glory. Nevertheless such Priviledges ought to be regarded, because however Sovereignty may exert it self in with-holding these from some; yet those Servants of Christ who enjoy them, seem fitted to use them without a Snare; and not so capable of designed Service in the Want of them: Yea, All must thence Conclude, We serve a Master as Able to supply us, with the Blessings of a present State, as with those of a Future; and therefore its from the Contrivances of Wisdom ever joyn'd with Goodness, that any Useful Minister shall want them.

I O U have a great Stack to Account for, whom God entrusted with Two such Ministers; the Death of both should be entertained as a solemn Warning, to apply your selves to give a comfortable Account by due Improvements; that This as well as the Former Discourse may greatly contribute thereto, shall be the Prayer of

Your Servant

in the Gospel,

Daniel Williams.

[1]
A

Funeral Sermon.

Zechariah I. 5.

*And the Prophets do they live
for ever ?*

IT's Usual with the Sacred Writers,
in Cases which are plain, to con-
clude a Point by *Interrogations* ;
that so we might be more affectingly
convinced ; when an Appeal is thus
made to the Common Sence of Man-
kind, that it cannot be otherwise.
My Text is among the Instances of
this kind, *Do the Prophets live for
ever ?* q. d. It's most plain and cer-

B

2 A Funeral Sermon.

tain they do not live for ever, it's manifest to every Man, that the Prophets of *Former Ages* are among the Dead, and those of the *Present* are sure to follow into the same State. You of this Congregation, will not easily suspect a Truth, so sadly attested by the Death of One, and another Faithful Dispensers of the Gospel among you. Nor can I without Sorrow, find my self Preaching the Funeral Sermons of both of them, in so short a Span; but Submission to Divine Providence is as well our Interest as our Duty, and when the Improvement of the most severe is possible and required: I have for that End fixed on this Subject, as the plain Language of these Sudden Breaches.

Obs. *THE Prophets do not live for ever, but dye as other Men.*

I shall Consider,

I. *THE Persons spoken of: Viz. Prophets.*

II. *WHAT's*

A Funeral Sermon.

3

II WHAT's predicated concerning them: They *Do not live for ever*, but dye as other Men.

I. THE *Persons* Spoken of are *Prophets*: A Prophet is a Title of such Trust and Honour, that *Christ* himself bears this Character, which you see in those Words. * *But Moses truly said unto the Fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, &c. And it shall come to pass, that every Soul that heareth not this Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the People.* Persons in this Office are reputed of that Necessity and Use to the World, that King *Joash* bewails a Dying Prophet in these Words; † *My Father, my Father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.* From their peculiar Intimacy with God, they are called *Men of God* ||. And undoubtedly they are his Instruments in effecting his most Gracious

B 2

Pur.

* Acts 3. 22, 23. † 2 Kings 13. 14. || 1 Sam. 2. 27.

Purposes towards Mankind : For by them, he makes known himself, and reveals his Will and Counsel, in what concerneth their *Eternal* Happiness, as well as *Temporal*.

THESE are the Persons whose *Mission* God solemnly and oft avoucheth, and whose Message he is most concerned to stand by and execute. For the Safety of their Persons he is solicitous, * *Do my Prophets no harm*; they who receive them are sure of a *Reward* †. Yea, so jealous is God on their Behalf, that the Arm of a King shall wither, if he || *Stretch out a Hand against them*; and very Children are devoured by Bears (a) for but scoffing at them.

BUT least you should on the one Hand think I shall assume too much, in applying to Gospel-Ministers, any thing spoken of the Prophets: Or, on the other Hand be misled to ascribe

too

* Psalm 105. 15. † Mat. 10. 41. || 1 Kings 13. 4.
(a) 2 Kings 2. 24.

A Funeral Sermon. 5

too much to us, if we are included in that Character; I shall let you see, that two Sorts of Persons are designed by the Name of *Prophets*.

1. *SOME* are *Prophets* in the more *Eminent Sence*: viz. Such Persons as are extraordinarily called, and inspired, for the immediate Revelation of God's Will, or future Events.

2. *SOME* are *Prophets* in a less *Eminent Sence*: viz. Such as are called in a more Ordinary Manner, and by the more Common Gifts and Affistances of the Spirit, in Conjunction with their own Study; explain and apply the Truths published and revealed before. Of this Sort are the Ordinary Ministers of the Gospel, tho' those immediate Revelations be not pretended by them; as were Common to the other Sort of *Prophets*.

I Shall speak of each of these,

1. *THE* *Prophets* in a more *Eminent Sence*, were Persons called in

6 A Funeral Sermon.

an extraordinary Manner, and inspired for the more immediate Revelation of God's Will, or of future Events. These indeed, are most commonly designed by the Word *Prophets* : They were not confined to one Family or Tribe, as the *Aaronical* Priesthood was. They were not such by Education, Preparation or Acquirements of their own ; tho' sometimes God was pleased to inspire some of those Societies, called, *The Sons of the Prophets* *. If you ask, why these are termed the *Sons of the Prophets* ? I answer, because they did altogether apply themselves to the Duties of Religion, and Devout Exercises under the Conduct of some great acknowledg'd Prophet, as *Samuel*, *Elijah*, *Elilba*, &c. but you ought not to think that all of them became Prophets ; and much less, that their Guides could at their own Will, derive to them a Spirit of Prophecy by their preparatory education ; how-

* 2 Kings 2. 25.

A funeral Sermon. 7

however that might tend to remove sundry Impediments to that Office. This Subject requires to be Enlarged on, beyond what a Part of a Sermon can admit ; yet I give a few Hints.

1. GOD revealed his Will to these Prophets in a more immediate Manner, than to ordinary Ministers : I say *more* immediately than to us, because it was so, even when God made use of the Ministry of *Angels*, to declare his Mind. Indeed, this way of Revelation cannot be called so immediate, as when the Matter was internally suggested by the Holy Ghost to the Prophet's Mind ; or when God himself formed Words, externally conveyed to the Ear of the Prophet, as 1 Sam. 3. 11. or Figures placed before his Eyes.

NEVERTHELESS a Message by Angels may be called immediate, if compared with the common Way of God's discovering his Mind to us ; as

8 A funeral Sermon.

when the Angel bid *Zechariah*, * *Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I am jealous, &c.* You will find several receive some of their Prophecies in this manner; as *Daniel* †, *St. John* ||, &c. In such Cases, the Angel is at least, as properly to be called the Prophet; as the Man who received the Discovery from him. On which Account it may be, that the Angel spake to Saint *John* (a), *I am thy Fellow Servant, and of thy Brethren the Prophets.*

BUT the more immediate Revelation was, when the Spirit himself represented objectively to the Prophets, what they were to deliver as the Will of God; which as much obliged the Faith, and Obedience of such they were sent to; as if God had immediately spoken to them, what he so uttered by these as his Mouth. And *David's* Account of the Matter is clear,

* *Zech.* 1. 14, 16. † *Dan.* 10. &c. || *Rev.* 1. 1.
(a) *Rev.* 22. 9.

A Funeral Sermon.

9

clear. * *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue.* The same is signified as to others by such Words as these, † *It's revealed by his Holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit.* || *And as he spake by the mouth of the Holy Prophets.* (a) *And What God hath spoken by the mouths of all his Holy Prophets.* What Obedience was due to the Words of these you may easily infer, when they are declared to be the very (b) *Commandments of God, which he commanded by his Servants the Prophets; and Disobedience is confessed to be a Sin, charged and punished as such.*

2. THE Manner of this more immediate Revelation was different. Sometimes by Dreams and Visions, God came to *Abraham* in a Dream, (c) *God said to him in a Dream.* The Psalmist in like manner informs us, (a) *I thou spakest in Vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, &c.* The same *Ezekiel,*

* 2 Sam. 23. 20. † Eph. 3. 5. || Luke 1. 70. (a) Acts 3. 21. (b) Ezra 9. 10, 11. (c) Gen. 20. 3, 5. (d) Psal. 89. 19.

kiel, *Isaiab*, *Daniel*; and most of the Prophets found frequently. Several Prophecies are called Visions, as the Vision of *Nahum* and of *Obadiab*. Oft there was no Difference between Revelations by Dreams, and by Visions. *viz.* When the Vision befell them in their Sleep, and when Figures were presented to them in their Dreams: Things thus occurring, the Words are used promiscuously, and signifie but the same Thing even when both the Words are used. So as *Job* 33. 15. *In a Dream, in a Vision of the Night.* *Daniel* speaks to *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Thy Dreams and the Visions of thy Head* *. In the same manner speaking of himself, † *Daniel had a Dream, and Visions of his Head.* But sometimes there were Visions seen when the Person was awake; and as the others are called || Visions of the *Night* and *Night* Visions; so these appeared when it was Day and the Prophet free from Sleep. Such
Daniel

* *Dan.* 2. 28. † *Dan.* 7. 1. || *Dan.* 2. 19.
 (a) *Dan.* 7. 7.

A Funeral Sermon

11

Daniel * mentions at the River *Hiddekil*, I lift up mine Eye and looked, and behold a Man cloathed in Linnen, &c. yet this Vision struck him on his Face and put him into a Sleep, v. 9. but raised him up, v. 10 The like Vision had *Samuel* † when awake, which is called a Vision; tho' he only heard the Word of the Lord by a Voice, and saw not any Similitude: Nay, the Word [*Vision*] is oft used for Internal Inspiration, as well as for Emblematical Resemblances; so || the *Vision* of *Isaiah*, &c.

YET however Extensively the Word [*Vision*] be applied, there is an Inspiration whereby God † oft revealed his Will to the Prophets; wherein there were not those impressive Images, Appearances and Voices; which more commonly attended Visions taken in the strictest Sence, and did greatly affect the Bodies and Animal Spirits of such, as had these Visions.

BY

* Dan. 10. 4, 10 8. † 1 Sam. 3. 10, 15. || Isa. 1. 1.

BY this *Inspiration* I mean, the Holy Spirit suggesting inwardly and in a still Manner; the Truths he moved the Prophets to make known, and deliver in the Name of God: With respect to this it's often said, the Word of the Lord came to Men; as to *Jeremiah* *, *Jonah* †, *Samuel* ‖, *Elisba* (a), &c.

YET mistake me not, as if Inspirations were confined to this more still manner of Revelation: For there was as real, and proper an Inspiration by Dreams and Visions, as in this; and the Spirit of the Lord is said to fall upon them, and his Word to come unto them by each of these; as you may see by (b) *Ezekiel* and many others: Yea, and (c) *All Scripture is given by Inspiration*, as well as some: Yea, it's extended to all true Prophets. As *St. Peter* instructs us, (d) *The Prophecie in Old time came not* by

* Jer. 1. 4. † Jonah 1. 1. ‖ 1 Sam. 3. 10. (a) 2 Kings 17. 3. (b) Ezek. 1. 3, 4, 5. & *Cap.* 11. 5. (c) 1 Tim. 3. 16. (d) 2 Pet. 1. 21.

A Funeral Sermon. 13

by the Will of Man, but Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Moreover, as to the designed Effect, they all came to the same thing; if you respect such Revelations as had a common Regard, especially in what concerns any part of the Rule of Faith or Manners: For by each, the Spirit signified the Matter intended to be revealed, in such a Manner, as the Prophet was enabled, infallibly and truly to deliver the very Mind of God, as it was represented to himself, Whether it was in Dream, Vision, or in a more sedate Inspiration. His Imagination received and retained it, according as it was impressed, whether the Matter was signified more plainly, or more obscurely. I say more *Obscurely*, because the Prophets did not always understand the Meaning of their own Prophecies; but were forced to ask Help for the Explication of them. Thus is acknowledged by them, as when * *I Daniel had seen the Vision,*
and

* Dan. 8. 25.

and sought for the meaning; then behold there stood before me, as the Appearance of a Man, who explained the Vision. But whether the Prophet understood or no, and however the Word of Prophsie * was given it was sure.

3. REVELATION, as used in Scripture, must be distinguished into that which was *proper* to the Prophets as such; and that which is *Common* to them with other Good Men.

1. REVELATION *Proper* to the Prophets as such, was when the Spirit of God represents to the Mind, or impresses on the Imagination, the Thing to be revealed. (1.) Without any intervening Act of Man's Invention or Judgment. 2. It carried in it, the Obligation and Force of an Original Rule and Standard. (3.) It was not to be in any thing changed, or

* 2 Pet. i. 19.

A funeral Sermon. 15

or altered by the Prophet's Consideration ; or by comparing of it with any other Rule. (4.) In sundry Cases, the Prophet's Understanding might be no further improved, or enlightened by that Revelation ; than the Understanding of such as perused it, after it was published by him. (5) It had not always a Sanctifying Efficacy on the Understanding, or Will of the Prophet, to whom it was given ; as you see in *Balam*, &c.

2. REVELATION is often mentioned, in a Sence Common to the Holy Prophets with other Good Men : This lies in the Illumination of the Mind by the Spirit, to discern spiritually and more fully, those Objects that were before Prophetically revealed. This the Apostle prays, all the *Ephesians* might be Partakers of ;
* *That the Father of Glory may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, for the Knowledge of him.*
The

* Eph. 1. 17, 18.

16 A Funeral Sermon.

*The Eye of your Understanding being enlightened, that ye may know the Hope of your Calling, &c. In this sort of Revelation, (1.) There was Room for, yea, need of diligent Search, Meditation, and Exercise of Judgment. This is not only enjoined Timothy, * Meditate on these things, give up thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; but it was practiced by the Prophets, and that as to their own Proyehecies. † Of which Salvation, the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently. When it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow unto whom it was revealed; that not unto themselves but unto us, they did minister the things that are now reported unto you. (2.) This Revelation hath not the Form of an Original Rule or Standard, but must not only be compared with, but regulated by what was before Prophetically revealed; nor is it to be Obeyed, nor doth it oblige otherwise,*

* 1 Tim. 4. 15. † 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11, 12.

A Funeral Sermon. 17

wife, than by its Conformity to the Law of Nature, or such Prophetick Inspirations, as were given to be a Rule and Standard. * *To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* (3.) This is capable of Additional Improvement and Advances of Light, and the Object to be presented in juster and more adequate Thoughts ; as it is more Extensively, and in higher Degrees represented and conceived of. (4.) The Understanding of a good Man, by this Sort of Revelation is enlightned, beyond what the Recital of his own Thoughts, when most illuminated thereby ; will necessarily make his Mind to be, to whom they are related : Yea, farther, by this sort Persons may better understand a published Prophetick Revelation, than the Prophet to whom it was manifested at first. Therefore David prays, † *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy Law* ||. And he meditated

* Isa. 8. 20. † Psal. 119. 18. || Psal. 119. 99.

in God's Precepts, and thereby became wiser than his Teachers. (5.) They who have this Revelation, find the Sanctifying Efficacy of the Truth revealed. They know it affectingly and operatively. Tho' the Matter receives its Evidencing *Proof*, from the Authority of a Prophetick Revelation of the Spirit recorded in the Word; yet it becomes *Spiritually* perceived, and savingly efficacious, by this Enlightning and Renewing Operation of the Holy Ghost, who fills that Truth with Power.

I Hope these short Hints will guard you, against the Mistakes of the *Quakers* on the one Hand, who make the *Rule* of Faith and Life in the Scriptures, to be imperfect, and to stand in need of Additions: And on the other Hand, against those profane Men who despise, as well as deny the Visitations of the Holy Spirit, as if he could not concur with our Rational Faculties in their Operations, by his illuminating Light and sanctifying Efficacy.

Efficacy. And indeed both the *Quakers* Notion, and that of these Men, do reduce all Revelation to that which is *Prophetick*, whereby the Canon was framed; and in the mean time, exclude this *Spiritual* Manifestation of those Canonical Truths, whereby they are made effectual to sanctifie and save us; and which we have reason to cover as most necessary for us, since the Scripture Canon is compleated,

3. THE *Prophetick* Revelations were attended with such *Self evidencing* Light and Power; as gave the Prophets a satisfying Conviction, that they were truly from God and no Delusion. It's undoubted, that God can give Men an Assurance past all Suspicion, that it is he who speaks, and is the immediate Author of those Notices which he gives them. He can satisfy them, that there is no possibility of Delusion as to what is suggested; yea, and that in such a Manner, as to exclude (as too low) those Rational Proofs of, and Enquiries concerning

cerning them, which are requisite in Ordinary Cases.

THE Evidence was so great, that Disobeying what was commanded, or Refusing to go upon any enjoined Message, or Concealing any thing they were required to publish, was very sinful; tho' the Prophet had no other Notice, besides this Revelation to oblige him; as we see in *Moses*, *Jonah*, &c.

MOREOVER, we find the Prophets distrusted not their Revelations, even tho' the thing revealed was oft strange or improbable, or far transcending former Discoveries, or dangerous to their own Lives, yea, or seemingly *unlawful*; as against plain Precepts. Of each of these, Instances might be given, of the last you have that Command to *Abraham*, for offering up his Son *Isaac*; for his Consent whereto, he was so rewarded as well as applauded; *Gen. 22. 1, 16, 17.*

BUT

BUT to describe the Way where-
 by God assured the Prophets, that it was
 he who appeared, and spake to them
 by Dreams, Visions, or more silent
 Inspiration; and how this Assurance
 became such, as to set them beyond
 Jealousie and Danger of Delusion,
 must be dark to any who never felt
 it; or at least somewhat like it in
 the Extraordinary Approaches of God
 to his own Soul. Whether it was
 by some Objective Sensible Glory
 accompanying the Revelation; or by
 the peculiar Power of that *Flatus*
 which moved them, or by the strongly
 impressed Effect of the thing revealed
 upon the Soul; yea, and Body too;
 or by a powerful assent of the Mind,
 wrought and excited by the Virtue
 of the Spirit; in such near approaches
 of his unto the Prophet, called *His*
coming upon him *. Whether it was
 sometimes by one, or the other, or
 by all conjunctly in some Cases, or
 C 3 by

* 2 Chron. 20. 14.

by any other way, it's difficult to determine and not very needful to enquire.

4. THE Matter thus revealed to the Prophets was of sundry Sorts.

THEY were Eminently called *Prophets*, from their Fore-seeing and Fore-telling things to come ; to enable them hereto is the Prerogative of God, *By whom the End is declared from the Beginning* *. But there are other things as proper to their Office, and at least of as great Importance in their Nature, as well as Usefulness to Man, and Subserviency to God's Government over him ; as Predictions of future Things can be. For to them was revealed the Nature and Perfections of God, especially with respect to what the Light of Nature did imperfectly, uncertainly, or not all discover, as the Trinity ; the Reconcileableness of his Offended Majesty to Man, and

* Isaiah 46. 10.

A funeral Sermon. 23

and not Fallen Angels, &c.

TO Them did God make known the Person and Offices of Christ the Mediator; the Covenant of *Redemption*, the *Way* of the Salvation of Sinners. To Them God revealed the Conditions of Pardon and Peace, the true *Nature* of those Conditions, and the certain *Connexion* between those Conditions and those Benefits.

TO them God revealed the *Means* of our deriving Grace, and the Manner and Nature of the Spirit's Operations. As also the Priviledges of Saints, the Promises to the Church, the Glorious Condition of the Blessed in *Heaven*, and the Solemnities of the *Judgment-Day*, the *Resurrection* of the Dead, the Power and Miseries of *Devils*, and the undone and distressed State of Impenitent Sinners in Hell: Nor must we exclude the Account given of our Depravedness by the *Fall*, nor a more certain Account of *Moral* Duties and Man's

true Happiness, than the darkned Light of Nature yields; and much less any *Positive* Duties and Institutions.

IN Short, the Articles of our Faith, the Rule of our Duty, and the things that most affect our Fear and Hope; do chiefly depend on the Revelations given to these Inspired Persons.

THE imperfect, wild, false, and uncertain Notions, the Wisest Philosophers had of the least obscure of such Things, as Moral Duties, and Man's true Happiness; and their utter Ignorance of most, may assure us the Sublimest Matters were beyond Humane Invention: Nor can we imagine, that any thing below Revelation could afford that *Certainty* or *Obligation*, as the Nature and Consequence of the great Things of Salvation do require.

THEREFORE, How Ungrateful to God, and Cruel are they to themselves; who despise the Benefit we have

have by those Inspired Persons, whom God employed to make known what is of so near Concernment to us; and we could not otherwise be acquainted with!

YOU see, I meddle not with *Special Messages*, or Warnings upon Particular Occasions to this or that Man or Place; and much less, with what may concern one's Self in way of Comfort, Warning, or Reproof, by personal Application of some Established Truth, or Direction as to Dangers or Events (something whereof may still continue). But my Point refers to Predictions of the General State of the Church; and more especially to such Revelations, as the Rule of Faith and Duty is fixed by.

5. THE Apostles and all such, as had immediate Revelation of Gods will by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, for the use of the Church; are to be esteemed in a rank at least equal with the Prophets.

UNDER

UNDER this Head I include the Evangelists who recorded the Acts and Sayings of our Lord Jesus ; tho' I insist chiefly on what concerns the Apostles.

I know the Apostles are distinguish'd from the Prophets of their Time ; *Some Apostles, some Prophets* *. But that is because in that place by Prophets, are mostly designed foretellers of future things ; whereas Revelations of Doctrinal Articles and Rules for Practice, were chiefly granted to the Apostles †. Apostles are likewise distinguished from those *former* Prophets, by whose Revelations the way of Salvation was made known to the World ; but there the ground of distinction lies ; in that additional part of their Office to that of Prophets ; *viz.* Their being *Witnesses of Christs Resurrection*. But that doth not exclude them from being Prophets, for they were Persons by whom God spake to Men as his own Mouth ;

The ff.

* 1 Cor. 12. 28. † 2 Pet. 3. 2.

A Funeral Sermon.

27

1 Thess. 4. 15. Upon them the Church was Built, * *You are Built on the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner Stone.* their Doctrine was to be received as Revealed to them, hence called † *Their Doctrine.* And tho' when they appealed to former recorded Revelations, for the conversion of *Jewish* Unbelievers, the *Bereans* justly examined the Scriptures; yet in many things their Revelations were an Original Rule, and obliged to Credit and Compliance, without any other Attestation than their Testimony that it was of God; this I say was sufficient after their Mission was proved.

AND it will appear, if you consider how many Duties we are under by Gods Commandment, received only from them; which commands are of equal obligation with those of the Prophets: || *That you may be mindful of the Words which were spoken before by the Holy*

* Eph. 2. 20. † Acts 2. 42. || 2 Pet. 3. 2.

28 A Funeral Sermon.

*Holy Prophets, and the Commandment of
the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour.*

THEY changed the Jewish Oeconomy, Worship and Officers, and put an end to Sacrifices and Circumcision; which with the like, were the appointments of God; and therefore could not be altered but by himself. They erected Church Officers, prescribed several parts of Worship and Rules of Discipline: Now if these are not the *Laws* of God, its no Sin to transgress or neglect them; if they be his *Laws*, then the Holy Ghost spake by these Apostles; and what Articles he delivered by them must be believed, as from Men prophetically inspired.

SHOULD any say they had not Prophetick Revelations, but as Men of Grace and Judgement, they inferr'd under common assistances from Reason or former Revelations, whatever they declared or appointed. I answer, many of these things were contrary to the former Institutions of *Moses*, and other inspired

A funeral Sermon. 29

inspired Persons; and the Apostle Paul distinguisheth what he so inferred, from what he delivers by *Revelation* as the infallible Will of God. * I speak this by permission, and not of Commandment. Unto the Married I command not, not I but the Lord; but to the rest speak I, not the Lord, &c. Now concerning Virgins I have no Commandment, yet I give my judgment, &c. (†) Finally, What was unknown to former Ages, was revealed unto Holy Apostles and Prophets by the Holy Spirit.

6. WHEN Men were obliged to receive from the Prophets, their Revelations as the Word or Will of God; he sufficiently attested their Office, and that they were inspired and sent by him.

WE see, when God gave Laws and settled his Worship in *Israel* by *Moses*; many Miracles were performed by him,

* 1 Cor. 7. 6, 10, 12, 25. † Eph. 3. 4, 5.

him, and such Visible Appearances of God among them, as could not but convince, that God spake those things by *Moses*. Moreover, tho' we do not read that Miracles attended every Prophet, who was only employed to apply those Truths which had been before attested; yet either by the Truth of his Predictions, some peculiar Power attending him, the Testimony of Established Prophets, or other Signs of his Mission; they were convinced of his Call, before he was esteemed a *Prophet of the Lord*.

IN Times of great Revolt, God was pleased to grant sometimes the Power of working Miracles, altho' the Prophets made no Change in Worship, nor afforded any further Light in Points of Doctrine; but principally were employed to reprove Apostacy from those Rules of Worship and Practice, which were before revealed. This we find when *Elijah*, *Elisba*, and several others, were sent to testify against revolting *Israel*.

WHEN

WHEN the *Jewish* Oeconomy was to be dissolved, a Gospel Constitution to be erected, several Articles of Faith to be assented to, and Christ to be received as the Messias and Teacher of the Church ; then many Miracles were performed by Christ and his Apostles, as God's Attestation to their Mission, and to the Things revealed by them. And tho' we see not such Miracles in our Days, yet we have no reason for our Incredulity ; because the Truth and Rules we are enjoined to entertain, were fully and openly established and recorded ; and due Means used for transmitting the same with the Evidencing Miracles of that Time to us of this Age ; and this beyond the Certainty of any other History, yea, and supported by the Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies, yea, those of the most improbable Sort ; and the continued Efficacy of those Truths upon the Hearts of the most prejudiced, and that without Humane Force, yea, and in the Face of Opposition.

7. WHAT.

7. WHATEVER in the Sacred Scriptures, is revealed by the Holy Prophets or Apostles, in the Name of God as his Revelation; we ought to receive as the Will and Truths of God, infallibly recorded and transmitted to us. * *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable, &c.* Among the Scriptures St. Peter † includes the Writing of St. Paul: It's true of all as of David, || *He spake by the Holy Ghost, i. e. by his unerring Direction: Nay, as if the Spirit had designed to obviate some late Objections, we find in another place, (a) That the Scriptures might be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake by the Mouth of David.* Which notes, that the Spirit of God made use of David as his Mouth to utter his own Mind, and as his Hand by which he wrote his own Will; for it is a *Written Psalm* to which he refers. *Thus saith the Lord* is oft prefixed to what

* 2 Tim. 3. 16. † 2 Pet. 3. 16. || Mark 12. 37.
 (a) Acts 1. 16.

A Funeral Sermon. 33

what the Prophet declared, which are Terms too great for any Inferences made by a fallible Light; nor can any acquit themselves from being Impostors when they use this Phrase, if uncertain as to the Matter, and conscious that God was not the Author.

I MUST a little enlarge on the several Parts, included in this Particular.

I. THAT the Persons speaking or writing, were the inspired Prophets of God at that Time; which I offer, because the Speeches of other Persons in the Bible, are not the infallible Will of God; unless they be approved as such, by the inspired Penmen; or some other acknowledged Prophet.

I ADD, that at *that Time* they were Prophets, because some were employed upon an Occasional Message, and others more statedly entrusted

D with

with Divine Revelations; of this last sort were *Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Nathan*, and sundry others in the Old Testament; and all the Apostles, except *Judas* in the New Testament: Of the former, among others was the * *Old Prophet* near *Bethel*; he was of Old a Prophet, in delivering some particular Message; but not so stately employed, as that his Pretensions deserved Credit with the other Prophet, against the former Revelation to himself; altho' a Vision from God was pleaded by him: For, when the Spirit of the Lord went from any, a Regard to their Words as Prophetical was to cease.

2. THAT the Prophets mention it as the Revealed Mind of God, and in his Name. This I suggest, because where they express only their private Sentiments, without pretending to a Revelation, or to declare it as from God, that must not be believed as the infallible

* 1 Kings 13. 25.

A funeral Sermon. 35

fallible Testimony of God ; but is to be examined by the common Rules of Truth. *Nathan* highly approves *David's* purpose to build a House for God, and by his private Judgment encourageth him thereto ; * *Go, do all that is in thine Heart, for the Lord is with thee.* He without a Revelation, thought so good a Design as that, in the Hand of one so favoured by God as *David* was ; could fail neither of Acceptance nor Success : Thus he proposed his *Private Sentiments* as such, without pretending an immediate Message from God ; or, the Use of such Words, as, *Thus saith the Lord.* Whereas upon the Ensuing Vision he contradicts his private Judgment, and *In the Name of the Lord* forbids, the Design he approved before ; where-to *David* submits, from a sense of the very different Authority of this, from what the Prophet had formerly declared ; for now the *Word of the Lord* came to *Nathan*, saying, *go, and tell my*

D 2

* 2 Sam. 7. 3, 10 18.

my Servant David, thus saith the Lord, shalt thou build me a House, &c. According to all these words, and according to all this Vision did Nathan speak to David. Then went King David and sat before the Lord, &c. The Apostle Paul* (as already instanced) plainly distinguisheth between what he uttered in the Name of God as an Apostle; and what he inferr'd to be Truth, in a Manner common to other Saints, by the Ordinary Assistances of the Spirit upon serious diligence. And as Holy inspired Persons could easily judge between their own Reasonings, and immediate Revelations; so their Piety as they were Saints, and the Blessed Spirit as they were his Instruments; must lead them to signifie that difference to others, whenever there was a danger of Mistake.

3. THE Will of God is infallibly recorded in the Scriptures, by such as were employed to transmit the same to us.

THE

* 1 Cor. 7. 25.

THE great Design of Revelations was, to instruct and oblige other Persons besides him who was inspired; therefore that which was revealed must be justly represented; or Men must be imposed on, and at utter Uncertainty, whenever the Matter of the Revelation was declared to them. But, besides this Mistake in the Guide of our Faith and Rule of our Duty, which we are subject to where the Will of God is misrepresented; it's further to be considered, that if the Holy Ghost did not so influence the Penman as to prevent Error, our Faith would be altogether a *Humane* Faith; as to whatever the Pen-man thus left to himself recorded. The reason whereof is this, a divine Faith must terminate on a divine Testimony, which because such is infallible, and is resolved into this, *The Truth of God declares it.* But if you do not suppose at least the Conduct of the Spirit, whereby the Penman shall declare infallibly the Will of God, his Decla-

ration will be fallible, because himself is so ; and the Ground of Credibility is safely resolved into what *he is*, if you allow him to be under unerring assistance, which nothing below what's Divine can be.

I am sensible there are two doubts, which deserve a larger discourse ; than my time will allow for the discussing of.

1. **T H E** integrity and veracity of the Pen Men of the New Testament, suffice to assure us of the Truth of what they write, tho' they had no immediate Revelations ; and therefore such Revelations were needless.

Ans^r. I grant, that in recital of such matters of Fact as themselves beheld, their veracity is sufficient, to induce our Assent to the truth of such things. Nevertheless it appears necessary,

1. **T H A T** if the belief of those matters of Fact be a condition of Life, and

A funeral Sermon. 39

and the disbelief thereof be damning ; those Persons in relating those things must be under such a Character, as may assure us, that God will not suffer them to misrecite, what is of such consequence to be believed, and danger if distrusted.

2. WHEN they deliver Articles of Faith, not so expressly Revealed before ; or require Duties uncommanded till then, or give Notice of further Priviledges than the Church was before acquainted with ; in such cases a divine Revelation is necessary, and their veracity is of no further avail, than as they Witness that God Revealed such things to them. And indeed what more in those cases do they Witness, than that they received such things *from God*, and were moved by his Spirit to publish them ? Nor is the meer integrity of the Persons, of greater use to induce our Belief therein ; than as it assures us, they durst not affirm God declared such things to them, if no such thing had been declared by him.

But still, their Office and Employ by Divine Command, with promise of his assistance in their transmitting his Will to us; doth give a higher assurance of the certainty of what they deliver, than their personal Integrity will afford: Yea, be this never so great, their Testimony is but *Human*, and therefore an insufficient Ground to specify our Faith as *Divine*; or to render it congruous, that our belief should be saving, or unbelief destructive without a Divine Attestation. This point is decided if *St. Paul* were either sincerely honest or inspired, when he tells us, *All Scripture is given by inspiration from God*, &c. 2. *Tim.* 3. 16.

2. *Doubt.* THE Words of Scripture need not be indited by the Holy Ghost, altho' the Revelation of the matter expressed be granted.

Ans. 1. UNLESS the Words which be made use of, do truly and fully signify what the Spirit would have recorded; his Revelations are mis

A Funeral Sermon. 41

misrepresented to Men, and the Danger of this, if the choice of Words had always been left to the meer Skill of every Penman; is too apparent to need more, than I have already spoken on that Head.

Ans. 2. WHEN the Holy Spirit suggested Truths to the Mind of an inspired Person, those Truths might as easily be signified by Words *Indited* by the Spirit, as by Words *Invented* by the Inspired. For Instance, when the Spirit informed St. *John* of the future state of the Church; could not the Spirit excite and direct his Mind, to conceive the Revelation under determined Words; and enable his Memory to retain the Matter under those very Words, as well as under any Words of his own Inventing. And yet this will not hinder the Spirit's accommodating himself, to the Instruments he is pleased to employ; for he declares his Mind by Words directed by himself, according to the various Endowments and Style of such,

such, whom he makes use of ; yea, and serveth great purposes by that Variety. If he design to speak of plain things, or to Men who can better understand, and be more affected with more vulgar Words ; he inspires such as *Amos*, and excites and guides his Imagination to conceive of, and utter what's revealed, in Terms familiar to himself. In like manner, he chooseth such as *Isaiah* the Prophet, to deliver things more sublime ; and for the advantage of such, to whom a loftier Way of Expression is more agreeable.

Ans. 3. IN sundry Cases it was Necessary, that the very Words by which the Will of God is expressed ; be dictated by the Holy Spirit. For Instance, when the Prophets *understood not* the Meaning of what they heard and wrote, it was dangerous (if possible) to declare the thing truly, unless they confined themselves to Words indited by the Holy Ghost. So in *sublime* Matters the Notice whereof

whereof is entirely depending on Revelation, and where great stress lies on a Word, and the least Variation is dangerous, as in some Articles of Faith; and Descriptions of the Terms of Life, &c. In such cases, the Holy Ghost would not leave it to Man's Invention to form Words, upon which the Faith of his Church, and the Rule of Judgment so entirely depended: He who *Chargeth his Angels with folly*, would not place such Trust in fallen Man; in Matters for which he is so insufficient, as he is in the forecited Cases; Whatever their fitness might be to record Matters of Fact, or such plain Matters as the Duties made evident by the Light of Nature; or which by former Revelations, become universally received and understood.

Answ 4. IT can scarce be doubted, that the *very Words* recorded in many parts of the Scriptures; were indited by the Holy Ghost.

WE

WE find several Passages called *The Words of the Lord*, and this when they are recited after they had been spoken, and written by the Prophets. And * *Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the Words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him.* Of Prophecies when written, the Holy Spirit saith, † *Until the Words of God be fulfilled.* Can any doubt whether the Ten Commandments written by *Moses*, were the very Words which he received from God? Nor is it unusual, for God to enjoin the Prophets to write the Words which he gave them; as to *Daniel*, || *Write these Words.* The same to *Jeremiah*, (a) *Write thee all the words that I have spoken to thee in a Book, &c. And these are the words the Lord spake, &c.* In like manner, God gives a Charge to *St. John*, *He said to me, write, for these Words are true and faithful,* Rev. 21. 5. Need I add, how oft is the Holy

* Jer. 36. 4. † Rev. 17. 17. || Dan. 10. 9. (a) Jer. 30. 2, &c.

A Funeral Sermon. 45

Holy Spirit said to speak *Ta*, and By his Servants in the recorded Words.

MANY other Considerations might be offered, but those Persons who think to solve some Difficulties in the Historical Account of several things in the Scriptures, by denying the Words to be dictated by the Spirit; I hope, may yet esteem what is already proposed, sufficient to prove, that many of the very Words of Scripture were indited by the Holy Ghost; and that it cannot safely be otherwise, in proposing the great Articles of Faith, or Terms of Salvation, or Promises of saving Benefits; especially where such Things are called the *Words of the Lord*; or connected with such Phrases, as *Thus saith the Lord, Thus spake the Holy Ghost, The Word of the Lord came to such a Prophet, or such an Apostle spake thus By the Will of God*; and the like. Having thus far taken Notice of these two Doubts about the Sacred Books of the Inspired Writers, I proceed
to

to the last Thing included in the
Seventh Proposition.

4. THE Divine Revelations thus transmitted to us in the Scriptures, we ought to receive as the Infallible Will and Truths of God.

THIS needs no Proof, for to refuse it, is only to proclaim our own Ignorance, Impotency, Injustice, Infidelity, Evil Disposition and Perverseness; not to receive things of this Moment as set in that Light, Evidence and Authority proper to them; argues a Disregard of our own Welfare, and is no other than to shut our Eyes that we may pass to Hell securely; and come short of Salvation without a Sense of our Loss. Nevertheless this Evil is too common, and it appears by the Lukewarm Regard we have to these Heavenly Oracles, and their Weak Effects upon the Temper and Lives of most Men. We all lose the great Benefit of the Scriptures, as far as we neglect
to

to acknowledge their Divine Original, and overlook the Impress of God upon them; but did we behold them as the true Revelations of God, Words *Himself* spake, as surely as if we had heard him: Did we consider them enforced by such Expressions as these, *Thus saith the Lord, this spake the Holy Ghost, this God hath declared to us by his Son; or by his Chosen Witnesses: Oh! what Power would we feel in every Truth, to direct our Judgment, affect our Hearts, and govern our Wills and Practice?*

WERE they thus received, we should firmly assent to those revealed *Doctrines*, which seem least reconcileable with our *Reason*; and realize by Faith what's more remote from our Sences, for he hath appointed them, *Who knows all things, and cannot lye.*

HOW chearfully and firmly should we expect the Performance of the richest

richest *Promises*, and Accomplishment of the greatest *Prophecies*; when the *Almighty God of Truth*, hath thus solemnly and certainly engaged himself by his own Mouth, to fulfill them! With what humble Reverence, should we search the things we yet *Apprehended not*; when we look at them as Beams of Light, darting immediately from Unerring *Wisdom*! Every *Precept* must command Subjection, when entertained as the *Charge* of him, who is our great *Ruler*, *Judge*, and a Jealous Inspector of our Hearts and Ways.

ALL the *Threatnings* would strike an Awe upon the stoutest Heart, when clearly apprehended as pronounced by the Mouth of a *Just Ruler*, who is a *Consuming Fire*, and *Able* to execute the severest Sanctions of his Law.

WHAT *Concernedness* would possess our trifling Minds, when Truths are considered by us with Conviction; that the *Excellent Majesty* of Heaven
and

A funeral Sermon. 49

and Earth, is thereby informing, pleading, warning and directing us his Creatures, designed for an Endless State of Happiness or Misery: Neither would such a View be useless to encline our Hearts to love those Truths, for the sake of this great God, who thus *Condescends* to guide, plead, importune and perswade such inconsiderable, guilty, carnal, obstinate, earthly, vain, incredulous *Apostates*.

Oh! how would our Prejudices, Excuses, Delays, and carnal Disputings be silenced and overcome; if we never thought of Scripture discoveries, but as the infallible Will and Truths of the Living God. Things most fully attested, most true, and that shall hereafter, be acknowledged by all of us, to be true and most important. Thus they are apprehended wherever they are savingly effectual, *1 Theff. 2. 13. When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of Men, but*

as it is in truth the word of God; which effectually also worketh in you that believe. And to the Degree they are thus received by us, we shall find their Efficacy.

2. HAVING finished what I judged necessary to be spoken, concerning Prophets in the first and more Eminent Sence; I proceed to such as are called *Prophets*, tho' in a *Lower* Sence than the former: viz. The Ordinary Ministers of the Gospel, who by Divine Institution, stately preach to Men in the Name of Christ; by duly Explaining and Applying, the Scriptures and Law of Nature, under the Assistances of the Holy Spirit, and his Blessing on their Studies.

THOSE Parts of their Office which refer to Sacraments, Discipline, &c. are more remote from my purpose, than what I have mentioned.

THAT these Ministers are not excluded from the Name of Prophets,

A Funeral Sermon.

51

is thus evinced : The whole Body of true Gospel Ministers during the Reign of *Antichrist*; are called Prophets ; * *They have shed the Blood of Saints and Prophets* : i. e. Of the Godly Members and Ministers of the Church, who opposed the Man of Sin ; and it's most probable, they are designed † by those Words, *And they shall send Gifts to one another, because those two Prophets tormented those that dwelt on the Earth* ; which Torment was by their Doctrine, called || *A fire which proceeded out of their mouth*. The Ministration of the Gospel by them is termed Prophecy ; (a) *That it rain not in the Days of their Prophecy*. Nor can the Reason given for (b) *Judas and Silas* being mentioned to be Prophets, argue that they were other than Gospel-Ministers. And *Judas and Silas* being Prophets also themselves, exhorted the Brethren with many words and confirmed them. Their public Ministerial Exhortation (which

E 2

IS

* Rev. 16. 6. † Chap. 11. 10. || Ver: 5.
 (a) Ver. 16. (b) Acts 15. 32.

is the Work of Common Ministers) is justified by, and ascribed to their being Prophets. And the Apostle's Words can scarce allow preaching the Gospel not to be meant by Prophesying ; * *He that prophesieth speaketh unto men, to Edification, and Exhortation, and Comfort.*

OF the Prophets of this kind, *viz.* Gospel-Ministers ; I shall briefly remark three Things.

1. AS these do not since the Finishing of the Scripture Canon, need the Eminent Prophetick Inspiration, or Immediate Objective Revelation ; so they ought to manage themselves, as Men who pretend not thereto.

THEY must use Prayer, and Study, and Rational Helps to seach the Scriptures, to understand what is revealed in the Word ; and not depend on nor pretend to *Immediate* Teachings :
Thus

* 1 Cor. 7. 3, 4, 39.

A Funeral Sermon. 53

Thus *Timothy* was advised by the Apostle *Paul*. And they who assume more, do too often either falsely deny their Pre-meditations, or profane the Gospel by their confused Impertinencies and Nonsense. Moreover, the Gospel Preachers must humbly depend on the Assistance and Blessing of the Holy Ghost, as Men subject to Error and Mistake ; yea, as such, they ought patiently to suffer their Hearers to examine their Doctrinal Assertions, without expecting their Assent, further than their Assertions are proved by Scripture, or the Light of Reason.

NEITHER may they without the Brand of Usurpation, invent New Doctrines or Duties ; coin New Terms of *Communion* of Saints, nor Rules for, or Parts of Divine Worship ; nor yet charge that to be *Sin*, which neither the Scriptures nor Light of Nature forbid.

NO other Reason for these Limi-
E 3 tations

tations need be urged, than that these things are peculiar to the Eminently Inspired Prophets; and can be warranted only by such immediate Revelations, as constituted the Divine Rule of Faith and Practice; which Rule must be violated by such Additions, and the Transgressor becomes thereby exposed to that dreadful Curse, * *If any Man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book.*

TO aspire at Immediate Revelations in Ministerial Work, without designing such Changes and Additions, to the Divine Established Rule is extremely *vain*; and to make these Changes and Additions without pretending to such Revelations, is the grossest Usurpation. Happy Church! if Humility had always prevented both the Extreams.

2. MINI.

* Rev. 22. 18.

2. MINISTERS must be qualified with Ministerial Gifts, and called to this Office.

THEIR Employment cannot be discharged without suitable Gifts :
 * Can they *teach* what they understand not ? How will they *Divide the Word*, who are not able to distinguish Truth from Error ? How will they *confute Gainsayers*, who will be baffled in defending Fundamental Truths ? Will they *Declare the whole Counsel of God*, who need to be catechis'd in the plainest Doctrines ? Are they *apt to teach*, who have not learned the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and are as bad at Perswading as Instructing ? Such Men can never be a Blessing to the Church, who neither edifie others in Knowledge, nor establish them in the true Faith, nor use apt Means to promote their Holiness.

E 4

THE

* 2 Tim. 2, 24. Tit. 1. 9.

THE *Scrupulous* are sure to waver and be tormented, while their Doubts must be resolved by Men so unskillful; and to be misled in Difficulties, when solved by *Casuits* of this kind. People may be pleased with their Noise and seeming Affection, until by some better helps, they grow judicious enough to nauseate them; or by Learning their Nonsense, become confident enough to ascend the *Pulpit*, as well as they,

BY such *Unqualified* Preachers the *Worship* of God becomes contemptible, the *Souls* of Men endanger'd, able *Ministers* of unequal Lungs deserted, for putting Men to some pains to learn; the Veneration due to the *Office*, and necessary to its good Effects, converted into profane Disdain; and the *Peace and Order* of God's House unavoidably broken and overturned,

THEY must be ignorant of *Satan's Devices*, if they mean well, who serve such

A Funeral Sermon. 57

such bad purposes; and the worst of Men if they intend these, or other base Designs. Such *Ambassadors* dishonour our Blessed Lord, by their incapacity to deliver his Message; and while they still continue Ignorant, have no reason to plead that Christ did choose illiterate Tradesmen to be Apostles; for tho' he found them such, they became Eminently accomplished; but neither these Men, nor their Predecessors are approved by such a Miracle; nor have they Ground to expect such a Reward for their Presumption.

OUR Blessed Lord intended no such unfit Persons for *Gifts* to his Church; and the Office pretended to by such is a *Nullity*, tho' the most Conceited Church elect them, or fifty Bishops should ordain them.

BUT will Gifts, much less a Conceit of them suffice to constitute a Minister? No, for *How shall they preach except they be sent?* Rom. 10. 4. A
Call

Call is requisite, tho' not in that extraordinary Way, peculiar to the first described Prophets: Christ hath taken more Care of his Name and Church, than that Self-conceit, or the Opinion of the Ignorant should be the Judge of Mens fitness; or that Persons out of the Sacred Office should invest Men in it. It's enough, that the People judge what Minister is most like to edifie them; it's too much for them to determine, who is fit to be a *Minister*; or to convey the Office, which, by Divine Appointment, is to be *By the Laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. The Welfare of the Church is provided for, by confining it to this *Body*, in Bar both to such who are less fit to judge of Qualifications, and more careles of the Honour of the Ministry; as also such, who form a depending *Disparity*, by pretence of an Higher Office, than Christ discriminates from *Presbyters*; by either Power, Honour, Work, or Name.

IT's

IT's true, an Inclenable Devotedness, with Gospel Designs and sincere Piety, give Satisfaction of God's Call to the Minister himself, but I mention only, what falls under the Decision of others ; heartily wishing, that neither *Ambition*, meer Concern for a *Livelihood*, or Discontentment with their *own Station*, pass not with many for an *Inward Call* ; especially with such, who refuse a Trial by Impartial, Able Ministers, from a Sence of their own Unfitness.

I HAVE been larger on this Head from a Conviction, that it must prove well or ill with the Church of Christ ; as the Pulpit is guarded, and Ministers are qualified.

3. THESE Prophets or Gospel-Ministers, are greatly intrusted, privileged, and encouraged by our Lord Jesus.

THEY

THEY are *Stewards* in God's House *, they *watch* for Souls, and are *Rulers* of Christ's Flock †, they are *Ambassadors* for Christ ‖, his *Special* Presence is with them (a), the Holy Spirit breaths in, and works by their Ministry; they dispence to Men the *truest* Blessings, and treat of the *Highest* Matters. Whatever they *duly* (b) threaten, promise, censure or seal, Christ ratifies in Heaven, and in due time will fully execute.

THEY are entitled to *Honour* (c), and *Creditable Maintenance* (d). Christ is concerned for them, and in the Treatment they meet with, (e) holding *Them in his Right Hand*. They have Opportunity to possess the *Higher* Degrees of Glory (f). That Blessed Heaven will make amends for the Contempt, Sufferings, Self-denial and Reproach; to all which they are more exposed

* Tit. 1. 7. † Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24. ‖ 2 Cor. 5. 19.
 (a) Mat. 28. 20. (b) Mat. 16. 19. (c) 1 Tim. 5. 17.
 (d) 1 Cor. 9. 14. (e) Rev. 1. 16. (f) Dan. 12. 3.

A Funeral Sermon. 61

exposed than others. Nor will the Greatness of their Account or Labour, which require more than ordinary Sollicitousness be repined at, if they are adjudged faithful.

I HAVE finished the first Point, *viz.* The Subject or Prophets, including Gospel-Ministers; it remains, I speak of what in my Text is said concerning them.

2. *THESE Prophets do not live for ever, i. e.* They do not always abide on this Earth, but their Souls are separated from their Bodies; they are *dissolved* and removed from this present State by Death, as well as others. Not only the False Prophets dye, but the true; who pleaded God's Cause and stood in his *Secret*. If any might be exempted, it's these; of whose Number were the only *Two*, that were translated; *viz.* *Enoch* and *Elias*, whose grosser parts were refined, and Souls purified to a Meetness for the Life, Sights and Employs of the *Heavenly* Regions. This was a Change equal

equal to what they, who are found alive at the Coming of Christ do undergo; and no low Priviledge to them, not only as it made the *whole* Person sooner happy, but as it was less awful, and averse to Nature, than Separation by Death, and the Rottenness of the Grave; and therefore seems desired by the Apostle *Paul*, who expresseth a Regret at the Common Death in his greatest Longings for Glory; when he saith, * *Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon.*

BUT the Sovereign Exception of these *two*, shall not violate the Common Rule: Others, tho' Prophets, must dye. Aged *Samuel* lives not always. You see they dye, yea, *all Sorts* of them expire and depart. The Grave receives the *Royal* Prophet *David*, and the *Eloquent* Prophet *Isaiah*; as well as the *Herdsmen* *Amos*. *Moses* was in many things priviledged above

* Cor. 5. 4.

A Funeral Sermon. 63

above all others Prophets, and his Prayer secured the Lives of thousands, yet could not he delay his own Death 'till he entred *Canaan*. *John* the Baptist, tho' greater than a Prophet, lives not for ever. In this I'm sure *Peter* hath no Priority above others. The Apostle *John*, tho' by a Mistake of Christ's Words, reported to be immortal*, and lived so long that his Co-ævuals might be fixed in that Conceit, yet he is overcome by Death at last. *St. Paul*, tho' carried up to Heaven while alive, must yet return and come down to dye.

WHERE's our Publick Spirited *Dr. Anvesly*, our Penetrating *Mr. Baxter*, our Polite and Upright *Dr. Bates*? Among the Dead we have lodged them. And now we are recording, that the Useful *Mr. Woodhouse* is dead, is dead; yea, in a short uncertain time, it will be true of me, and the rest of my Brethren, they are also Dead. IT

* John 21. 23:

64 A Funeral Sermon.

IT may seem needless to prove what's writ with the Sun-beams; and experienced every Day, yet I shall inforce it by Two Things.

I. THE Prophets are sure to dye, upon Reasons *Common* to them with other Men,

THESE are of the same brittle make with others. * *Frail earthen Vessels they be, notwithstanding the treasure they contain; Dust weakly cemented, their Life is Breath soon stopp'd a thousand Ways; † Angels by Office, but far from these in Constitution; and God minds || Ezekiel amidst his Seraphick Visions, that he was still a Son of Man.*

HOWEVER Endowed or Renewed they are still among the *All* (a), against whom a Sentence of Death is past; they have Sin attending them, which

* 2 Cor. 4. 7. † Rev. 2. 1. || Ezek. 2. 3.
(a) Heb. 9. 27.

A Funeral Sermon. 65

which is the Cause of Death, and frequent Harbingers of its Approach; they are subject to Accidents common to the most exposed. This Earth since the Curse, can no more be a *Paradise* to them, than to others; they need that Purgation by Death, which shall consume the Root of Sin: Nor will God always keep them from their Home and Rest. Oh! Vain Man, that cannot realize a Thing so Sure as Death, and Earthly Man, that cannot get above an *Inordinate Love* of Life.

2. THEY are sure to dye, from some Reasons *More peculiar* to themselves, than to others.

SEDENTARINESS much exposeth them to Diseases, Intense Exercise of *Mind* waits their Spirits, whoever escape, the Rage of *Persecutors* takes hold of them. They are under Disquietness of Spirit, and filled with Disturbing Thoughts, by growing
F Errors,


66 A Funeral Sermon.

Errors, Divisions, Reproaches and Resistance of Sinners.

THEIR Hearts are daily pierced by the unperswadable Obstinateness of their Hearers, Scandals of their People, and the Death of useful Instruments; and oft are they eaten up by Zeal for the House of God, and Grief at the Declension of Christ's Interest in the World, as well as press'd down by their Cares and Labours.

IT's not seldom, that the *Sins* of the *People* kill their Ministers, commonly, as they forfeit their Lives by Unprofitableness; and sometimes (tho' scarce ever in this Age) by too great an Esteem of them: Their great Labours also make *Rest* the more necessary, and should these *Outlive* a Capacity for Service, not only would their former Repute and Performances be Ecclipsed, but there be few in such Danger to expose the Sacred Ordinances to Contempt, and to disho-

nou



A Funeral Sermon. 67

nour Religion so much as they. If we reflect on all these things, we may better wonder, that *Ministers* live so long, than that they dye *so soon*, as well as certainly.

APPLICATION.

THE *Former* Part affords Scope for many Practical Inferences, but this being a *Funeral* Discourse, I shall confine my self to the *Last* Part; viz. The Mortal, Dying State of Ministers. Sirs, We shall dye as certainly as any of you, our Breath is in our Nostrils, a Period will be soon put to our Labours and Opportunites of Service: It's not long before You and We must part, and your Eyes see us no more in a present State. Surely, this cannot be so Empty a Subject, as to afford no Instruction; it's not so faint a Matter, as to excite no practical Thoughts either in You or Us. Are so many Prophets dead, are we all within a step of Death, and must not the *Living lay it to Heart?*

68 **A Funeral Sermon.**

Living Ministers and Living People too?

I SHALL therefore Apply my self in sundry Exhortations.

1. *TO Ministers.*
2. *TO our Hearers in General.*
3. *TO You of this Congregation in Particular.*

Exhort. 1. *TO Ministers*: And this shall be, (1.) *With respect to Successors.* (2.) *To your People.* (3.) *To your Selves.*

Exhort. 1. *TO Ministers* of the Gospel.

THIS Text speaks aloud to You, God gives Warning that your *End* will come: Oh! how happy were it that all our Labours, and Behaviour did express a lively Sence, and constant becoming Impressions of it! Did we perform and contrive all with *Death* in our Eye, right and great Ends would be still designed; and Care, Vigor and Solicitousness would be
excited

A Funeral Sermon. 69

excited for effecting those Ends. You shall *Certainly* dye, and that soon, and for ought you know, suddenly: Oh! then manage your selves accordingly.

(1.) *WITH respect to Successors in your Work*: Be concerned to raise up and improve such, as may fill up your places, when you are removed. Aged *Paul* cultivated Young *Timothy*, and he took Care of a Succession, *For this cause I left thee in Crete, &c. to ordain Elders in every City**. As you would not suffer the Interest of Christ to dye with you, nor let the following Age be destitute of Helps to their Salvation; be solicitous that such Helps be provided, who may propagate Religion and defend the *Truth*, when your Service is at a Period. That Selfishness were devilish, as would be pleased to have Posterity mourn over you; as the last Ministers employed to save Sinners.

TO avoid all Suspicion of this, I beseech you, Perfwade Youth of

F 3

Parts

* Titus 1. 5.

Parts and Probity, to fit themselves for Gospel Work; yield them all Assistance to enter upon it when qualified (yet with Care to *Lay Hands so suddenly on none*, who may endanger the *Church* by Errors, Ignorance or Scandal) impart to such hopeful Instructed Persons, the Effects of your Experience, by warning them against Snares, directing them in their Studies, fortifying them against all Assaults they may meet with; supplying their unacquainted Minds with Advice, how they may prove most Universal, Successful and Significant Blessings in their Generations.

AS an Instance of your sincere Desire, to have the Work of Christ prosper when you are dead; Look to your Spirits, that you who are Aged envy not the *Younger* Ministers; but chearfully encourage them as the Hopes of the Rising Ages. Youth affords them some Advantages, beyond those of your declining years; be truly

A funeral Sermon. 71

truly pleased therewith, as far as they contribute to greater Service; if their Gifts exceed yours rejoyce in all such Presages, that Religion will flourish when you can no longer serve it.

IT's as much your Duty to delight in, and promote the Usefulness and Acceptation of Young Ministers; as it's their Duty to *Honour* you, for transmitting the Gospel to them, by your Labours and Sufferings, when they were incapable of yielding any Advantage to it.

IF they *Despise* you, they consider not that you spent your Vigorous Youth in Faithful Service; nor that they will find Decays and Uneasinesses when they grow Aged: On the other Hand, for you to envy and discourage them, would argue, not only a Forgetfulness of the Encouragements you expected, and the Allowances you needed in your Younger Years; but also discover that in your Old Age, you are concerned for your own Credit, more than for the Cause of Christ, or the Welfare of the Church.

2. *WITH respect to the People:* Carry it in all things to them, as Persons *You must shortly leave* Do for them and contribute to their Eternal Welfare, what you can without *Delay*. St. Peter was still careful to improve the Churches, from a Sence of his own dying State; and to fix those Truths in them, which might be profitable after his Decease: 2 Pet. 1. 13, 14, 15. *I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, &c. Knowing, that shortly I must put off this Tabernacle.*

IF you with-hold Reproof from Offenders, you may dye before you have an Opportunity to apply it; and so they perish in their Sins, without possibility of being awakened, or reformed in your Days: Therefore rebuke and warn them, in the *First Season* which is offer'd; for as Future Time hath its own Work, so you are not sure of that Time, to repair your present Omissions. Be in Constant Travail to get *Christ formed in dead Sinners,*

A funeral Sermon. 73

Sinners, and pursue this as Men who consider, that if you are long unsuccessful, *You* shall never prevail with them

WHEN you purpose to benefit any Soul, engage therein with such Thoughts, Here is one I cannot many Years be useful to, if he long wander I shall not recover him; what Help I can give for his Establishment or Comfort, he must *Soon* improve or remain as he is. It will be vain on a Death-bed, to lament over the State of any neglected Soul, let his Misery be never so great or dangerous; when you *might* have done them good, then you *would not*; will be a very bitter Reflection.

HAVE you not Pity enough for Souls that you pretend to love? then look what a distressed State you are like to leave them in, and ask yourselves; Am I content to depart while they be Slaves to the Devil, Enemies to Christ, and Self destroyers? Look among your Hearers, Consider your own Families, and Examine the Case
of

74 **A Funeral Sermon.**

of your Friends. and do none offer themselves to your View, whose Case needs to be greatly alter'd; some ignorant, some secure, or backslidden; others weak in Grace, or under sinking Doubts, unstable and erroneons, the Condition of each presseth hard for Relief: Can you endure to think of entring into Eternity, before those be instructed and converted; and the others more improved, comforted and established. If you cannot be willing to this, attempt their Amendment *presently*; that you may have a Hand in their Relief, and the Comfort of beholding a Change in their State before you dye.

IF you have been too unconcerned, how Matters stand with People for another World; bewail your Disregard, and be more affected with, and solicitous about their Happiness; for *Indifferency* ill becomes dying Ministers, in what concerneth the Salvation of dying Souls. St. Paul judg'd the Benefit of the *Philippians*, worth a suspence of his Entrance into Glory, tho'

A Funeral Sermon. 75

tho' assured of it; *Phil. 1. 24.* Yea, could even wish himself *Accursed* from Christ, to have his *Kinsmen* saved: *Rom. 9. 3.* And is the Worth of a Soul abated in our Days, and the Salvation thereof so lessened in Value, that we can be so unconcerned where Kindness is professed, and Duty doth oblige? Shew your own Belief of unseen Things, by suddenly helping all those to final Safety, whose Welfare you desire.

(3.) *WITH respect to your selves, both as to your Trust and Personal State.*

AS qualified Young Men should not needlessly delay entering into the Ministry, because Time for Service may be shorter than they imagine; so they who are engaged in this Work, ought to govern themselves, as *Tender, Mortal* Persons.

I SHALL not insist on such Rules of meer Prudence as these. Neglect not your *Health* so as either to hasten your End, or to indispose you for Service before you are removed; the *Former* will imbitter Death, and the
Latter

Latter will make Life grievous as far as you are accessory thereto. Neither be so Careless of your *Families*, as by Waste or Improvidence to expose them to Beggery; for you should consider their Subsistence generally depends on your Lives, which are frail and short; and you of all Men should not seem *Worse than Infidels*, in not providing for them. Nor yet, should your Affairs be unsettled, if you have any thing to disposed of by *Will*; for Ministers who must not live *always*, may dye as *Suddenly* as other Men. But my Design is to *Exhort* you, to what refers to your Discharge of your *Trust*, and securing the *State* of your own Souls; and both under a Lively Prospect of your *Approaching* End.

1. *BE Diligent and Vigorous in your Place, as knowing you will dye soon.*

TRIFLE not in your *Study*, if you would acquire a Considerable Stock of Knowledge. Waste not Time, or else despair of being great Proficient, and eminently fitted for your Work. Such as are *Young*, have the
Season

A Funeral Sermon. 77

Season of Laying up a Stock to spend, when the Employments and Hurries of a greater Age will much divert them; and the *Elders* have such room for Improvement, that no Hour should be idly spent, nor any Means be slightly applied to.

I WISH none were *Workmen* who need be ashamed, 2 Tim. 2. 15. yet such will they continue always, who squander *Time*, and are as *Remiss* in the Means of Profit, as if they were sure to live for ever. But they who are Ministers have a *Great Trust* committed to them, even the Souls of many Persons, and the Interest of Christ in their Day and Place. You have *hard* Work, and therefore be earnest and resolved; you have *much* Work, therefore be industrious and diligent; and that you may neglect neither the one or other, always Meditate that the *Season* of Working is fixed, and of short Duration. Our Lord gives us an Example, *I work while it is Day, for the Night cometh wherein no Man can work*, John 9. 4. He would neglect

glect no Minute of the Day, tho' he could do much in a little Time.

YOU may outlive your *Liberty*, you may outlive your *Health* and *Abilities* for Service ; but be assured, *Death* must put a full stop to all your Opportunities of Labour ; *What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might ; for there is no working, nor device, nor wisdom in the Grave, whither thou art going ;* Eccles. 9. 10. A View of an unseen World would excite all the Powers of our Souls, and can we refuse to look into that, when we are so *Near it* ; or coldly plead with Sinners, while Heaven and Hell are present and plain to our Eyes ? We deal in Matters of the highest *Nature*, even Things Divine and Eternal. We treat of things of the greatest *Consequence*, no less than the Everlasting Life and Death of Souls. We pursue Designs which are most *difficult* to be effected, opening the Eyes of the *Blind*, raising the *Dead*, pulling down *Satan's Kingdom*, erecting the *Throne* of Christ, and all this against a degenerate Nature,

A Funeral Sermon. 79

ture, a mighty and unwearied Tempter, and a World full of Diversions and Snares. How then can we loyter or be remiss? without Assiduity and a Fervent Spirit, our Business appears to be mistaken, and Hope of Success is very ungrounded. Past Unsuccessfulness might convince us with what Difficulty, and how slowly our Work doth prosper; what Fruit then can you reckon on, if you trifle away the few remaining Sands, or be remiss and indifferent in your Performances.

2. *Be Faithful in your Office, as Men sure to give an Account, and that ere long.*

IT's a strict Account we are to give for others, as well as for our selves; and the Event will be Extraordinary, be it Reward or Vengeance. Tremble therefore at the least Suspicion, that God will then *Require the Blood of any lost Sinner at your Hand*; Ezek. 3. 18. He will be found the Wisest Minister, who can say with Paul, *I am pure from the Blood of all Men,*

80 A Funeral Sermon.

Men, Acts 20. 26. But this it's impossible to be, if you spare due Re-
proof for fear of Offending some kind
Benefactor; When you avoid a close,
searching, importunate Ministry, to
please the Secure; you destroy your
selves and them. If you pluck not
Sinners as *Brands out of the Burning*,
you will stand guilty of their remain-
ing Miserable; and your not *Compelling*
them to come in, will be imputed to
you, as if you had kept them out.
Take heed that you speak not *Peace*
to such, upon whom *Destruction* is
coming; every Wound you *Slightly*
heal will prove your own Hurt.

A Connivance at any Fault, silence
under dangerous Symptoms, a Neglect
of Subjects that would more edifie,
and superficialness in applying proper
Truths; will be charged on you, as
down-right Treachery to Souls, Perfid-
iousness to Christ and Perjury against
your *Ordination Vow*.

AND the same Accusation will lye
against you, if you misapply or ne-
glect Church *Censures*; yea, or if you
con-

connive at growing Errors, or suffer any Truth of Christ to be trampled on by your base Cowardice; or comply with sinful Impositions, or desert your Work, or knowingly quit the Interests of a Redeemer in any Point.

It is required of Stewards that a Man be faithful, 1 Cor. 4. 2. You are appointed by Christ Stewards in his Church, and very shortly you'll hear that awakening Peal, *Give an Account of thy Stewardship*; how nearly doth it concern you to carry it so in all respects, that you may be approved faithful by that Judge, who is acquainted with all your Hearts and Ways? You are warned, *Take heed to thy Ministry that thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it,* Col. 4. 17. Let no part be neglected at any time, and in all your Administrations approve your selves to God, and to your own Consciences; if these *Condemn* you as false and deceitful, the flattering your selves, and being applauded by others will avail you nothing. Seek not to please Men to their Hurt, but benefit them to their

Displeasure ; the last will hereafter bless you, when the first shall curse you. Let it be manifest, that you have both heartily accepted Christ's allotted *Work*, and are well contented with Christ's promised *Assistances* and *Rewards* ; and therefore your *Fidelity* influenced the little *Time* you had to spend, if so, be sure your *Acceptance* shall be published, and your *Reward* proportioned to your faithful *Endeavours*, and not to your *Success* or *Esteem* with Men.

(3.) *LIVE* not to *Selfish Purposes*, nor be in chase of *base Designs*, which must fill you with *Blushes* in so few *Years*.

WE are fallen into an Age, wherein *Every one* seeks his own things, and no Man (i. e. few) the things of Christ, Phil. 2. 21. A Temper ill becoming any Man, because it's against *Humane Society* ; it agrees far less with a *Christian*, because he is bought by, and Self-dedicated to the Lord Jesus : But it's most abominable in a Minister, not only as his *Dedication* and

A Funeral Sermon.

83

and Vow are solemnly renewed ; but as it is a Direct Profanation of, and Contradiction to the whole of his Sacred Office. Here's an *Ambassador* who chiefly runs on his own Errand ; to the Neglect of the Message our King sends him on. Behold a *Steward* of Christ's House, but mostly solicitous and employ'd about his own little Affairs ; a *Watchman* who seldom looks beyond his own Cottage. Christ hath invested him with *Honour* and *Power* for publick Service, and these he Prostitutes to the Service of a Carnal Turn.

OH ! bethink you, Have I no greater Things to mind, and surer Things to pursue than Vain Glory, Man-pleasing or perishing Riches ? Shall the Honour of Christ, and the Souls of Men be postponed, or a pretence of serving these, be made Use of to such Servile Purposes ? Is it not an Abomination to Christ, when he beholds me neglecting his Work for these ? or accommodating my Labour in his Work, to the Obtaining of these ? Hath Christ called,

qualified, entrusted, and priviledged me as a Minister, to drive on this selfish Trade ; and make all Sacred Things a Stepping block to my own Advancement ? This is worse than primitive *Simony*, for it's a selling the Holiest Things for Money or Applause. But while you drive such *Bargains*, do you think how short a while you shall enjoy the Benefit of them ; and how little they will signify to your Happiness in another Word ?

BE so wise, as not to suffer the Noise of thy petty Projects, to stop thy Ears against the Cry of sinking Souls ; or the Claim which the Churches Interest hath to be prefer'd ; and know, that what the *Publick* suffers by thy private Traffick, will make thee at last, a far greater Looser, than all thy Gettings can counter-vail.

(4.) BELIEVE and Obey the Gospel which you dispence, as those whose Estate after Death depends thereon, as much as others.

A Funeral Sermon. 85

A BELIEF of the Gospel is not only Necessary to make you warm, earnest and diligent in your *Preaching* to others, but it is necessary to the Salvation of your *Own Souls*; but remember, an Assent which is unavailable to thy penitent Return to God, and sincere Acceptance of an *Entire Saviour*, can no more save, than a meer *Trust* or Perswasion exclusive of those. Therefore be earnest for a share in Covenant Mercy, and be solicitous to clear thy Title thereto, by the Grace to which it's promised. It were strange *Blindness* to think, thou canst get to Heaven by an easier Way than the Common People; when the Rule of thy Judgment is in some respects *more strict*. And it's strange *Cruelty* to thy self, to be earnest for the Salvation of others, and neglect thy own. St. Paul exerciseth so much *Rational Self-love*, as to prevent his own Damnation, as carefully as that of others; *I keep my Body under, lest when I have preached to others, I my self should be a cast away*; 1 Cor. 9. 27.

Yea, it's part of his Meaning, that his Preaching to others would aggravate his Misery, if he prov'd a Reprobate. Nor can it be less, if we consider that all the Warnings and Pleadings we used to others, will testify against our Unperswadableness. Every Mark of Grace we proposed to others, must reproach us, that it was not used in the Examining our selves ; and each *Direction* we gave others, will witness against *us* for not observing them. What Matter will *Conscience* find for gnawing Torments, when it reflects, that we lived in the *Sins* we so oft declared the Evil and Danger of ? We were *Careless*, when we still minded others to be diligent ; we *omitted* the Duties, we so frequently perswaded others to perform ; those very *Snares* and *Dangers* we warned others to avoid, we securely fell into our selves ; we took up with the very *Hopes*, which we foretold others would prove false and vain ; and at last perished, notwithstanding we had preached those Truths,

by

A Funeral Sermon. 27

• by which others were convinced, regenerated, and made to persevere unto Salvation.

WHAT Folly can be so unaccountable? as to commend *Heaven* so highly and yet to miss of it by Sloth, or for a base Idol; to set forth *Hell* as so terrible, and yet to fall into it for the Love of a Brutiſh or Devilish Luſt. To offer *Chriſt* ſo importunately to thy Neighbours, as ſo needful, uſeful, amiable and ſufficient; and yet to reſuſe him thy ſelf, as of no Uſe or Value.

IT's very ſad, we ſhould be found to have ſtudied the Goſpel, only for a Livelyhood *in this* World; and never conſidered and applied it, as a Means of Eternal Life in a Future World. Surely *Infidelity* muſt be the Cauſe, that we ſhould take up with this Earth; as a Reward for helping others to Heaven: Or, do we vainly dream, that Miniſters ſhall have a State of Trial *after* they are dead? that we dare end our preſent Life ſo unprovided for Happineſs, and

marked for Destruction, by *that very Rule*, we assure the World all others shall be judged by.

BUT I beseech you to be serious and intent, *To save your selves as well as those that hear you*; Apply the Edge of Truths to your own Souls: When you beg Grace for others, forget not your selves; and remember your Own Concern in that Way of Salvation you teach your Hearers.

(5.) BE patient and resolved under all your Hardships, as knowing you shall be delivered from them and possessed of Eternal Glory.

BY this Argument the former Servants of Christ, composed their Minds under their heavy Sufferings, and recover'd fresh Vigor of Spirit for their Work, when almost sunk with Labour. For which cause we faint not, but tho' our Outward Man perish, our Inward Man is renewed day by day: For our light Affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us an Eternal Weight of Glory, 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17. Heavy Work and Oppressing Service were
marked but

A Funeral Sermon. 89

but for a *Moment*, tho' *as* long as they hoped to live; and also soon to be exchanged into a *Glory*, which should always last and far *Outweigh* their *Pressures*; yet far from being burthenfome. A short Life and that which is *Eternal*, makes a great Difference in the Good that any Man enjoys, and in the Evil that he suffers; but when the Good is great, and *Eternally* to be enjoy'd, in the room of *Momentary* Hardships; we have good Reason chearfully to undergo our sorest Afflictions, and reassume our hardest Work. Therefore silence your Complaints, and relieve your Weariness by this Thought, the Evening of this irksome Day is *near*, a full Period to all that seems irksome will *presently* be set, and then will commence the Morning of that pleasant felicitating Day, which can *never* end; a Day wherein our Labours will be fully rewarded, and our Tribulation not be remembred; except with Joy, that we were called to bear them.

2. *I SHALL apply this to such, as be our Hearers in General*: You who attend our Administrations and frequent those Assemblies, wherein Ministers spend themselves; have much Duty to learn from this Subject: But I shall confine my self to four Exhortations.

(1.) *IMPROVE by us, as by Men whose Breath will soon be stopped*: Get all the Good by us that's possible, and that without Delay; for if you long abide unconverted, we must leave you so: If you much longer continue Weaklings in Grace and Comfort, we shall be capable of yielding no further Helps for your Edification; let your Need and our Desires be never so great.

BE intent to profit in Knowledge and Holiness, for *Our Days are numbered*; and when that Period comes, you can no longer have us to admonish you of your Faults, warn you of you Danger, direct you to your Duties,

A Funeral Sermon. 91

Duties, perswade you to Obedience, or solve your Doubts.

OH ! Then make not *Our* Death-bed uneasie, or *Your own* Case desperate ; by giving us bitter Reflections, that we leave you Slaves to Satan, and the World, and the Flesh ; after all we have done, or Hereafter can do to reclaim you ; you are not sure of more probable Helps, at least you may be certain, your Profit you get by us must be soon or never. And for your further Excitement, Consider,

1. WHEN we dye, we shall give an Account of our Pains and Success with you ; It will be your Loss to give in our Complaints against you, I left them as barren and unperswadable as I found them, but that Crown is yours if we have succeeded ; *Heb. 13. 17.* You shall be happy, and we shall with Joy declare, they received and savingly felt the Truth.

2. THE Word remains in God's Register, tho' we be dead : No Sermon will be forgotten, all will be re-

reviewed; You must account for all our Pains, and Pleadings, our Warnings, Directions and Counsels; *They shall know there was a Prophet among them*, Ezek. 2. 5. Our Words shall not fall to the Ground as quite lost, *My Word shall not return in vain*, Isa. 55. 11. and know, that as the Prophetick Word died not with the Prophet, so its Effects will be of the Highest Nature; viz. Salvation or Condemnation to you: It should startle you to think, that as short as our Lives be, *We are to you a Saviour of Life or Death.*

(2.) ADMIT and Bear with our Faithfulness and Plainness: You cannot expect, that we who are on the Borders of Eternity, dare trifle to please your Vain Fancy, or flatter to gratifie your Humour; or daub and palliate to avoid your Displeasure.

WERE we to live always here, we might be more easily tempted to consult your Pleasure in what we say; but when we consider, that both You
and

A Funeral Sermon. 93

and We are hastening into a World of Spirits, we must venture to *Pro-
fit* you, tho' it should displease; and be useful to *Your* Souls and true to our own, tho' your Kindness should be abated for it. In another World you would curse us, and we condemn our selves if by Flattery, Fear or Fondness; we should contribute to your Damnation.

(3.) *DO not hasten the Death of your Prophets*: They will dye soon enough: Your great Blessings are removed, when they are thrust out of the World; contribute not to it by Unkindness, drive them not hence by Grief, by Unperswadableness, Divisions, or Reproaches (which are frequently Heart-breaks) nor yet starve them and their Families, by your Penuriousness.

IT was a Prophet, who reckon'd *God would put his tears into his Bottles*, Psal. 56. 8. You have but a short Time to express your Kindness, and that may be shortned by your provoking God to remove them; or by
your

your disturbing them to such an Agitation of Mind, as may hasten their Death. But know, as they deserve better at your Hands, so the *Calmer* their Returns may be, the forer and suddener will be God's Testimony against you in their Vindication.

(4.) *EXPECT and Prepare for your own Death*: If the Prophet is not to live for ever, besure, the Gentleman or Tradesman shall not do so: Canst thou who art drowned in Worldly Cares look to be spared, when the most useful Men must dye? Is thy Service to a Common Good, or thy Fitness for it, equal to many dead Prophets; whose Bodies are Meat for Worms long since? God who values Men and their Lives by *Usefulness*, will not be more tender of the dry Tree than the Green. When he arrests by Death, those who spend and are spent for the Good of Souls; he'll make less of Cutting thee down, who either cumberest the Ground, or art less significant to the Publick.

OH!

A Funeral Sermon. 95

OH ! Therefore learn to dye, by *Dying daily*, be and do what you would wish your selves to have been and done, when on a Death-bed. Get into a state, which God's Gospel-Covenant secures ; See your Hopes be such, as the nearness of Eternal Objects cannot shake, when by their nearness they shall awaken thee : Carry it so, as not to be *Ashamed at Christ's Coming* ; 1 John 2. 28. Busie your selves to lay up, what will prove *Treasures* in another World ; and take not up with, nor lay out your prime Thoughts and Strength on, what you must leave and be disappointed by.

IN a Word, never think your Title to Eternal Life can be too clear ; and be you always intent, to improve your Meekness for Heavens Enjoyments and Employs ; that so you may be suited, to find Felicity in the Former, and Pleasure in the Latter.

3. TO You of this Flock, from whom two Ministers have been snatched away, in so little time.

1. BE awakened and humbled, as far as Divine Displeasure is instanced by the Death of your Pastor : Our Deceased Brother is taken away in an Age, fit for the Labour of many Years, and yet advantaged by Experience, to be of Greater Use than Younger Men ; and therefore his Death is a Greater Indication of *Anger*, than if he had been either too Aged or Raw for Service : Tho' I have nothing to lay to your Charge, yet I call you to make Enquiry what God reprove. Believe it, the Death of Ministers of Years adapted to Publick Good, is no small Judgment *in it self* ; and very often a Presage of greater. Is it nothing, to see a bright *Light* extinguished in this Dark World ? A *Praying* Person taken away, when Sins cry aloud and sore Judgments threaten this Land. What's a Stroak ? if it be none to have such a One removed, who

who knowing the State of your Souls, could adapt his Exhortations to it: You must feel it a Calamity that you shall see him no more, by whom God communicated his Grace and Comfort to your Souls; it must be a doleful Complaint, I shall be no more warmed by him, who oft kindled in me an Holy Fire; I shall learn no more of him, who by the Blessing of Christ, oft conveyed to me a Saving Light; he shall not again rouse me out of a Secure Frame, satisfy my perplexing Doubts, or reduce me from those Wandrings which tended to my Ruine. You who were converted by his Labours, need not be taught to cry, *My Father, my Father, to my Unspeakable Loss and Grief, is dead.* As to the *Presage*, The Righteous are generally *Taken away from the Evil to come*: Sirs, It is coming, it will be fore. All can perceive, that Way is made for Wolves among Stragling Sheep, when Shepherds are called hence, &c.

(2.) *BE not a Reproach to your Deceased Prophets after their Decease:*

H

Should

98 A funeral Sermon.

Should you be giddy, should you backslide, their Care and Skill would be subject to challenge ; as if they had not established your Minds, by their Ministry and Example. Let their Name be made precious by your Soundness, Stability, Religious Walk, and Fruitfulness in every Good Work.

(3.) *Tremble lest they witness against any of you :* Isa. 49. 4. Many will be their Joy and Crown in the Great Day, see that all be such : For it will be dreadful, that they who loved you as their own Souls ; should give a Testimony, that shall render your Aggravated Condemnation just : They will honour the Sentence of Christ, even against you.

(4.) *BE careful in the Choice of a Successor :* Adore the Goodness of God, that your Loss may be tolerably repair'd ; so that ye need not be long as *Sheep without a Shepherd.* I am thankful to God, you are neither indifferent about a Supply, nor so Nice and Captious, as no Man can please you, who is most likely to profit you. A Distemper too common in our Days,
and

A Funeral Sermon. 99

and will bring fatal Consequences.

ALL the Advice I would give you is, Be Unanimous, as hath hitherto been your Praise ; and propose your *Truly Spiritual Edification*, as that you would have him whom you call, most fitted to subserve. He that can most assist you to be safe in Reaching, and most *Meet* to enter into Heaven, will be your surest and highest Blessing. Niceties and Triflings will yield but little Pleasure, when you come upon the Borders of another World ; these I'm sure, were not approv'd by either of your former Pastors, while they lived in this.

I SHALL Conclude with some Account of him lately Deceased ; and be the shorter, because it was his own Way ; and also his own Desire, when I preached on the Occasion of his Wife's Funeral.

GOD began to deal effectually with his Heart in his Tender Years, and Prayer (his great Talent) was his frequent Exercise when very Young : His Soul thus truly changed by Con-

100 A Funeral Sermon.

version, and assisted by constant Supplies in return of Prayer ; he avoided Infection, and became Armed against the Snares of the University ; yea, so notably Serious, as to be admitted into the Intimate Society, of some of the Gravest Divines in that Place.

HE was but Young, when he removed thence to a Family of Note ; there the Evil Disposition of some Persons, made him more Cautious than usual ; and the Restraints his Prudence set on his Warrantable Freedom, commended Retirement to his Choice ; that neither the Crimes of others might corrupt or grieve him, nor any Inadvertency of his harden, or be exposed by them.

THIS Retirement was so blest, that he oft acknowledged, he never enjoyed that uninterrupted Communion with God in Secret ; as in the aforesaid Family.

IN this Private Condition he lived many Years, which he spent partly, in Securing the great Concernments of his own Soul ; by clearing his Evidences, improving his Graces and attaining

A Funeral Sermon. 101

taining to a more Confirmed State; and partly in informing and fixing his Judgment, both in the Disputed Articles of Faith, and in the Business of Conformity; required of all that were admitted Ministers in the National Church established by Law: The *Latter* he disallowed upon maturest Thoughts, nor know I many so qualified, to manage that Controversie as he was: In the *Former*, he proved Skillful as well as Orthodox, tho' disallowing Extreame, particularly as to the *Extent* of the Death of Christ, and *Conditionality* of the Covenant, with several Things depending thereupon.

HE to whom the End is known from the Beginning, and hath in Prospect the Service he designeth by every Instrument; made use of this long Retiredness, to qualifie our Brother for greater Utesfulness than himself foresaw; or rationally could expect: By this was he prepared to be an Eminent Blessing in his Generation, both in the Education of Youth, and the Salvation of Sinners by well adapted Labours: Nor did God long

forbear by Success to encourage him in his Ministerial Service ; but gave him an Early Pledge of more Extensive Fruits, by the Conversion of some in that very Family.

AND least his Zeal in awakening the Secure, might carry him to break the *Bruised Reed*, by unbounded Severity in his Notions or Expressions ; Providence about that time, directed his Acquaintance with a Pious Gentlewoman, under great Doubts and Perplexities of Mind ; by her Experience he became instructed, in the various Exercises of a Child of Light, *Walking in Darkness* ; there he found an Instance, what a Godly Person may be reduced to ; and how such should be dealt with, in those *Self-condemning Fears* ; which proceed either from Temptation, Weakness of Mind, Bodily Indisposition, or the Hidings of God's Face ; yea, sometimes from all together. But as hereby he was prepared, to be a *Vessel of Consolation* to many, so he became by the Divine Blessing, a Means of Peace to this distressed Person ; after the long Endeavours

deavours of several good Ministers had fail'd to satisfie her.

THE Purposes of his more Obscure Course of Life being obtained, he was directed into a *Married State*; and that under Circumstances, greatly tending to his own Comfort and Publick Benefit. The Person God gave him to be his Wife, was a Daughter of Major *Hubbard* in *Leicestershire*; a Woman of singular Piety, Good Estate, and to *Him* in all respects agreeable: She had refused very Considerable Matches, from a fixed Resolution to dispose of her self, as might be most Conducive, to guard her against the *Snares* of a *Present* Life, and prepare her for an *Endless* Happiness; and that she was not disappointed herein was evident, by her constant Advances in Holiness, great Meetness for Heaven, and comfortable Serenity in Death.

UPON this change in his Condition, he applied himself to *Educate* Young Men; and to preach more publickly and constantly: So far was he from that base Spirit of some, who

espouse *Idleness*, when they are capable to *Subsist* without Dependance; whereas our Friend reckon'd an Estate, a further Obligation to serve the Donor, and an *Encouragement* for more successful Service; as it shelter'd him against the *Temptations* of the Necessitous, set him above *Contempt*, and obviated that *Prejudice* against all Ministers; as if their most serious Endeavours came from no higher Aims, than to procure a *Maintenance*. His *Governing Dexterity* by a due Mixture of Sweetness, Art and Authority; gave him no small Advantage to profit Youth, under the Disadvantages of a *Private Accademy*. His *Diligence* was extraordinary, until a great Distemper enfeebled him. He *Piously* managed his House, as a Nursery for *Heaven*, as well as a School for improved Learning; and there be so very many Excellent *Ministers* in the Church, and Eminent *Gentlemen* already qualified to serve their Countrey; yea, disposed so to do so by his Care and Skill to principle them, as are fully sufficient to excuse my Saying any thing,

thing, as to his Stock of *Learning* and *Judgment*.

WHAT more deserves my Regard, is that of which himself made the highest Account, and frequently inculcated on other Students; *viz.* A faithful, diligent *Aim* at Usefulness in saving Immortal Souls, and the precisest Care to *adapt* their Study and Labours to this End. From this Design he could not be *bribed*, by an Employ of far higher Benefit to his Family; nor *diverted* by those many Threatnings, several Losses or Imprisonments he endured. Faith gave him such a View of the Intrinsic Nature, and Eternal Consequence of the Work of the Ministry; that he could not fail to judge it to be worthy of the *Deepest Studies*, a Reward of the most *Diligent Labour*, a Compensation for the *Sorest Sufferings*, and best becoming the *Greatest Souls*.

AS the Eternal Salvation of Men was his fixed Design, so he concluded the best way to effect it, was a plain, warm, *familiar* Way of Preaching: Therefore he chiefly regarded the frame
of

of his *Own Heart* in his Work, as what suggested the most *Moving Words*, and whence by the Divine Blessing he expected greatest Success. And indeed the Affectionate Seriousness of his Auditory under this Method, encouraged him thereto; altho' his Sermons should not please the Eye of the *Reader*, as they moved People at the *Hearing*.

IN pursuit of this End, he took hold of Private Seasons, especially the Time of Sicknes; and very industriously *Visited sick People*, in Hope that the Nearness of another World, might awaken Attention and Concernedness, in all Directions tending to prepare them for Safety in it. As he would cheerfully and thankfully mention, the *Success* of his Pains with any Person; so he with Bitterness *bewail'd* that certain Juncture of his Life, wherein a Blessing was more *Sparingly* afforded to his Endeavours.

BUT tho' God secured to himself, the *Glory* of making the Word efficacious; and awaken'd his Servant to *Inquisitiveness* and *Humility* by suffering him

A funeral Sermon. 107

him sometime to cry; *I have laboured in vain*: Yet he often favour'd his Zeal for the Benefit of others, by a *Signal Blessing* on his Ministry. Many of his *Pupils* call him Spiritual Father; about the Vale of *Beaver* he diffused saving Light, and was an Instrument in the Conversion of great Numbers; among whom some *Despisers* of himself were very remarkable Instances: In other Parts of the Countrey, he was not without Seals to his Ministry; nor did his Words altogether return in vain in *This City*; but had good Effect to convince, and regenerate several perishing Sinners; as well as to establish and edifie many, whom he found begotten unto Christ.

NOR is it very *Common* with God, to with-hold his Influences, where there be such *Good Presages* of Success; as a humble Distrust of our Performances, an Entire Dependance on God's Assistance and Blessing, and a solicitous Dread of being useless. Each of which took up much place in his Discourse with Intimates. It was a common Saying with him, *I am much afraid*

afraid of my Work, from a sence of my own Indisposition and Insufficiency, but when I have looked up to God for help, I found his Presence warming and enlarging me, &c. And yet sometimes, what I had thought best prepared, hath had least Success.

A FEAR of an *Unuseful Life*, was what frequently and deeply possess'd his Mind; nor was there any thing he did oftener and more expressly deprecate. When some unhappy Circumstances brake his School, it was his frequent Moan, *Now every Field is unpleasant, for fear I shall live to no purpose.* Also in his last *Sickness* his usual Cry was, *Oh! let me not live incapable of Service, unfit to be employed.* And when a little before his *Death*, his Indisposition for Study and Preaching, seem'd a little abated; what Joy possess'd him? what thankful Acknowledgments did he utter!

NEITHER is it unworthy our Notice, how indulgent the Providence of God was towards his Servant, and regardful of his Concernedness for his Work: For in a few Days after his Complaints upon the Period put to his School,

A funeral Sermon. 109

School, he was invited to be a *Pastor* in this place ; and God also put an End by *Death*, to that his *Latter* Dread of an Unprofitable Life : Yet not before he had improved that short Lightning, by *Returning* to his Preaching Work ; which he intermitted not 'til a very few Days before he dyed ; as if God at once would remarkably *prevent* what his Servant *feared*, and grant him an Opportunity to shew his faithful *Zeal*.

BUT his *Useful Attempts* were not confined to meer Ministerial Work, or the Education of Young Men ; but he was of Publick Influence in the *Country* (where he was better acquainted than in *London*) in advising his Neighbours in their Intricate Affairs, and Composing Differences among them ; yea, also in successfully guiding Multitudes, in what concerned the Safety and Liberty of this Nation ; when the Tide ran high against *Religion* and *Property*.

I THINK what I have already instanced will justify my Saying, that we have lost an *Useful Man*, and also discover his great *Zeal* to be such. And

yet

110 **A Funeral Sermon.**

yet besides what his prosperous Ministry, with other things do contribute to that Character; many of his *Pupils* are winning Souls, and promoting the Interest of our Blessed Redeemer, whereby the *Extent* of his Usefulness is beyond my Reach to measure; for the Blessing in it, is like *Successively* to descend to several Ages.

MOREOVER, his Care to observe the *Conduct* of Providence was very strict, well-knowing Man's *Unskilfulness* to direct his Ways, and the *Bitterness* of displeasing Events, when we trust to our own Conduct; as well as our *Usurpation* of God's place, whenever we assume it. Therefore he was accustomed to say, *I can go any where if God will lead*: Nor was he less ready with Thankfulness, to ascribe all welcom Issues and *Benefits* received, to the same Providence; as also to be submissively resigned to its Disposals in what appear'd more *Severe*. A greater Instance of this last can scarce be given, than his Calm Submission under the Loss of his Yoke-fellow; which is little less, than rending from one the half of ones self.

BY

A Funeral Sermon. III

BY his great moderation towards all who differ'd in Judgment, he became acceptable to Men of several Denominations, nor could it be otherwise on the Account of Opinion, except with such who limit their Charity as well as their Communion, by the narrow Bounds of their own Party; which on this very Account is to be suspected, to have neither a good Cause nor much Judgment, farther than Selfishness is concerned.

AS he was ready to shew *Kindness* to his Friends, so his *Charity* to the Necessitous was not barren. Several poor Students he supported, yea, at times hath maintain'd a Minister and his Family, until an Employment was provided for their Subsistence.

NOR was he *Ungrateful* for any Favour he received, with how tender a Sense did he acknowledge the abundant Affection of this Church! yet still therewith bewailing he could be no more useful to you; which testified that he laboured willingly with you, from a grateful Sense of your Kindness, as well as faithfully from his Duty to God. Happy Ministers so obliged! and happily advantaged People who so engage them!

BUT served he God for naught? Far from it. Mercy fill'd his *Life* beyond that of many faithful *Ministers*. He felt not the Streights or Snares of an *Indigent* Condition; instead of Trouble or Temptation by a *Wife*, she was a Relief under Trial, a Support to his Integrity,
and

and a Helper on of his Salvation ; and he apparently saw many of his *Children* in the way to Heaven, and one well-qualified and useful to bring others thither. He was tenderly loved by his *Relations*, and survived neither a *Will* nor *Gifts* for Service, he took a kind of Solemn Leave in the Sermon he preach'd with his usual *Warmth*; within a few *Days* of the *Period* of his Life. And Mercy followed him in his *Death*, Exercise of *Reason* was not intermitted, no, nor *Grace* neither. He prayed with great Fervour, the Tempter was chained from *Disturbing*, he was full of *Inward* Comfort, Gasping he chearfully joined with the Prayers of others, and *died* without a *Groan*.

THESE Gleanings from his useful Life, should awaken us to follow his Steps, wherein he is imitable. His faithful Labours with you, call aloud for proportionable fruit ; and seeing a Capacity employ'd in Service will not perpetuate Life, let all of us spend ours as Dying Persons.



F I N I S.